The Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-NEW

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR FUEL REDUCTION POLICIES: MULTIMEDIA VERSUS PRINTED MATERIALS

February 2007

Note: February 2007 edits are in blue.

A. Justification

1. **Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (PL-108-148) is the enabling legislation that improved the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands. The aim of the Act is to protect communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes (see attached legislation).

The tenet of this basic research is to compare survey administration methods (paper vs., self-administered video survey) to help improve future survey designs to elicit willingness-to-pay information about desire resource or program changes.

This study will test whether a self-administered video (VHS or DVD) survey elicits more support for prescribed burning and mechanical fuels treatment programs than a paper based survey. The data collection for this study uses a self-administered video (VHS or DVD) survey to compare whether the video survey instrument will increase participant response rates and participants willingness-to-pay[1] (WTP) vis-à-vis a phone-mail-phone survey instrument used in a study of the same states.

To our knowledge, the current study constitutes the first application of a self-

1 Willingness-to-Pay: Refers to the public's willingness to pay each year for the prescribed burning program and the mechanical fuels reduction program. This is economists' way of determining what the economic benefits are to a person. This measure of benefits is recommended by OMB for benefit cost analysis and is commonly used by federal agencies like EPA, USFS, COE and Bureau of Reclamation. The NOAA Blue Ribbon Panel on Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) (Arrow et al. 1993) suggests that respondent be reminded of substitute commodities and budget constraints prior to being asked the willingness-to-pay question (WTP). This is to induce them to think about the use of their limited budget for alternative commodities, including contributions to conservation projects. We decided not to include such reminder in this research because it would lengthen the video survey (likely reducing the response rate), and because in previous peer reviewed published research done on similar subject in Oregon in a CVM study of the benefits from reducing fire hazards to old-growth by the authors they found no difference in WTP responses with and without the reminder. The sample was dived in two groups; half received the survey with the reminder and the other half without it. The logit equations were not statistically different between versions and the mean WTP results were identical (Loomis et al. 1994)

administered video (VHS or DVD) survey instrument to value the economic chance of risk associated with fuels reduction treatments to mitigate wildland fires occurrence. The information collection has two purposes:

a. Comparison of response rates and WTP between a self-administered video questionnaire and a paper-based questionnaire; and

b. Provide information that will assist researchers in developing better-designed surveys.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

a. What information will be collected - reported or recorded? (If there are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)

With initial telephone contact, participants complete a mini-interview. The mini-interview will gauge participants' pre-knowledge regarding:

1) Use of prescribed fires to manage wildfire,
2) What prescribed fire means to them,
3) From what source they learned about prescribed burning,
4) Whether all fires should be put out,
5) Whether prescribed burning is dangerous to use,
6) Whether prescribed burning is effective in reducing excess fuels in the forest,
7) Whether their homes or other properties have been damaged by wildfire,
8) Whether a neighbor's property has been damaged by wildfire, and
9) Whether they were asked to or have had to evacuate their home due to a wildland fire. (See Appendixes A1 and A2: Screener, Spanish and English).

Participants in the in-depth interview will receive a mail video (VHS or DVD) and a paper answer sheet. Respondents to the in-depth self-administered interview will be asked:

1) Whether prescribed burning:
    a) Will effectively reduce the amount of excess fuels in the forest floor,
    b) Will reduce the chance of high intensity wildfire,
    c) Should or should not be used because of potential health problems from smoke production, and
    d) Is too dangerous to use;
2) Whether or not fire managers should use prescribed burning to clean the

forest floor;

3) If they would vote to establish the prescribed burning program presented in the video (VHS or DVD) survey and how much they would be willing to pay to implement the program; AND

4) Socio-economic questions to test how representative the sample interviewed is of the area population.[2]

The file code for the information collection will be 5190-3, with a retention period of 50 years.

b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (e.g., loan applicant versus a bank versus an appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.

The plan is to send a video survey (VHS or DVD) to all head of households randomly contacted in California and Montana that agree to participate in the study. The video survey will be in Spanish or English in California, and in English in Montana for a self-conducted interview.

In this context, the head of household is defined as the person responsible for paying household bills, since that person would be used to making financial decisions on behalf of the household like those requested in survey.

c. What will this information be used for - provide ALL uses?

Analysis of the responses will evaluate the change in the respondent's knowledge from the initial contact through the in-depth, self-administered video survey interview. This will assist in determining the combination of fuel reduction alternatives the population understands as the most effective, and the amount they would be willing to pay to implement such alternatives.

Fuels specialists and fire managers will use the findings when planning fuels reduction programs options. The information will assist in determining which survey delivery method (phone-self-administered video survey or phone- mail-phone interview) produces the greatest level of response and support for the fuels reduction programs evaluated.

Finally, a report of the study's findings will be included in one or more manuscripts submitted to refereed journals, and in one or more presentations to scientific/practitioner audiences.

d. How will the information be collected (e.g., forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the Internet)? Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?

All respondents participate in the same data collection format: phone-mail-self-administered video survey interview process (including completion of a paper answer sheet that is included in the package). A self-addressed, stamped

2 See answer sheet for California in Spanish and English, answer sheet for Montana in English.

enveloped for return of the answer will be included in the package.

The potential respondents will be contacted only once by phone. Those agreeing to participate in the study will respond to a mini-survey of nine questions (See Appendix A - English and Spanish) at that time. Potential respondents will then receive (via USPS) a self-administered video survey (VHS or DVD) and answer sheet. After a week, non-respondents will receive a reminder postcard asking for a response. After another week, those who have not returned their answer sheets will receive another copy of the video survey and answer sheet, and asked again to complete the survey. Two weeks after sending the second letter requesting their participation without a response, we will contact non-respondents by phone to ask if they will complete the answer sheet and if not to obtain some demographic characteristics of the respondent while on the phone for a non-response check.

e. How frequently will the information be collected?

This is a one-time collection. While each respondent responds at each stage of the collection, only one set of responses is collected from each respondent. Non-respondents will receive reminders and a final telephone call to encourage them to complete and mail the answer sheet, and if not to obtain demographic characteristics of them while on the phone for a non-response check.

f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?

The research results will be shared with other research units of the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and others with fire research responsibilities. The information will assist in determining which survey delivery method (phone-self-administered video survey or phone- mail-phone interview) produces the greatest level of response and support for the fuels reduction programs evaluated.

A report of the study's findings will be included in one or more manuscripts submitted to refereed journals, and in one or more presentations to scientific/practitioner audiences.

g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?

This is a one-time, new information collection

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Our sample selection will be through an initial random digit dialing procedure. Random digit dialing is the most comprehensive method that would ensure as wide range as possible of households are included in the sample.

Once the first contact is established, individuals are asked if they want to participate in the study. If they answer no, we end the conversation and tally the response as a rejection to participate for statistical purposes.

If the person agrees to participate, they are asked to provide a postal address to which we send a video (VHS or DVD) survey questionnaire and a paper answer sheet. Finally, a short series of questions are asked to ascertain their base knowledge on the issue of fuels reduction alternatives (See Appendix A; English and Spanish).

Having potential respondents participate in a computer-based data collection effort is not feasible. One of the intents of this collection is to test whether a self-administered video survey instrument increases the response rates and willingness-to-pay amount of participants compared to a paper-based collection previously conducted in the same counties in California and Montana. To assess the internal validity of results we will check whether the estimated coefficient of the bid amount respondents are asked to pay is negative and statistically significant. If this is the case it means that respondents where behaving according to economic theory, the higher the amount they were asked to pay the less likely that they would chose to participate and pay. Participants will be randomly assigned one of 10 amounts (for Prescribed burning: $10, 20, 30, 40, 60, 90, 120, 150, 250, 350; for Mechanical treatment: $20, 30, 40, 50, 70, 100, 130, 160, 270, 380).

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

To the best of our knowledge, this information collection constitutes the first application of a self-administered video survey instrument to value the economic chance of risk associated with fuels reduction treatments to mitigate wildland fires occurrence. Search of the survey research literature for similar studies was unsuccessful. The closest related survey found was an educational video survey for wildfire mitigation in the wildland urban interface of Colorado. Study results showed a significant increase in participant's post survey knowledge of wildfire mitigation (Vera 2003)

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The information is collected from individual heads of households in the sampled area and does not directly or indirectly impact small businesses.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

If the information is not collected, agencies with fire protection responsibilities will lack the information necessary to evaluate the general public understanding of proposed fuels reduction projects and programs or the public's WTP for implementing such programs.

Without this information, agencies will have difficulty determining the level of support for proposed fuels reduction programs that reduce wildfire hazard in the wildland-urban interface. This information will help agencies plan better fuels reduction programs that would be effectively targeted or accepted.

In addition, understanding the types of fuels reduction programs the public supports and incorporating that knowledge into project design may reduce the number of lawsuits and appeals that delay project and program implementation. Such challenges are likely to occur at a time in which agencies are being mandated to increase investments in fuel reduction program options to reduce the risk of large wildland fires.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

  This is a voluntary survey, with no requirement for response.

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**

  If the response rate were below 50 percent, results would not be generalizable to the county populations studied in California and Montana. The sample size is large enough to achieve reliable results for the intended populations and will be within 5.7 percent error margin for all three populations in the dichotomous choice CVM question. (Babbie 1991).

- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**

  No pledge of confidentiality will be made. Respondents will be assured of *anonymity*. The following statement will be included in the transmittal letter sent to participants: "*Your answers are strictly anonymous and will be used only for statistical purposes. You will not be identified in any way and your name or address will not be distributed or sold to any mailing list.*"

- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

  There are no other special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

The announcement for the proposed data collection efforts appeared on Federal Register: February 18, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 33, pg 8338 [05–3122]). Only two comments were received.

The focus of the first comment by Ms. B. Sachau was how the Department of Agriculture was a wasteful and power hungry agency, and that this data collection effort is not needed or should not be gathered at taxpayer expenses. No substantive issues of the proposal were addressed.

The other comment by Mr. Ed Ehlers, Executive Director, California Loggers Association suggests that this data collection process is not needed because Congress already had public input when crafting and approving the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003. He also suggests that the monies allocated for this project should be reassigned to do actual fuels reduction projects. Again, no substantive issues of the proposal were addressed.

No reply was sent by the Forest Service in response to these comments.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The following individuals were consulted:

- Dr. John B. Loomis, Colorado State University, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Ft. Collins, CO 80523; Phone 970.491.2485;
- Dr. Hayley Hesseln, University of Saskatchewan, Department of Agricultural Economics, 51 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7K 5A8, Canada; Phone: 306.966.8407;
- Dr. Joseph Champ, President, Champ Communication, 719 Great Plains Ct., Fort Collins, CO 80526, Phone: 970.282.0084

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

A small focus group of nine persons reviewed the survey instrument for clarity and understanding of content, to ensure the reality of the fuels reduction alternatives presented. Names and contact information for focus group members is not available.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than re-enumeration of contractors or grantees.

The survey research centers we have approached as possible cooperators to conduct the actual survey implementation have advised us on the difficulties they are experiencing in recruiting participants for survey research studies. One of the main reasons they point out is large telemarketing campaigns. The research centers suggest providing a cash incentive of about $5 per respondent to help us increase response rate.

Token financial incentives of a few dollars included with the request are effective at raising response rates. Response rates increased by 7 percent to 11 percent in studies cited in *Mail and Internet Surveys: the Tailored Design Method*.[3]

The study, *Contingent Valuation of Hazardous Waste Risk Reductions*, determined that a $1 incentive increased response rate from 45 percent to 64 percent. In this study, a two mailing treatment without a $1 incentive was compared to an identical survey with a $1 incentive included in the package. The package with the monetary incentive had a 19 percent greater response rate in California.[4]

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No pledge of confidentiality will be made. Respondents will be assured of *anonymity*. The following statement will be included in the transmittal letter sent to participants: "*Your answers are strictly anonymous and will be used only for statistical purposes. You will not be identified in any way and your name or address will not be distributed or sold to any mailing list.*"

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

Those individuals agreeing to participate can withdraw their participation at any time or can choose not to answer those questions in the survey they consider of personal or private matter (such as gender, age, education level, ethnicity, and income level). Other than these type of general questions, there are no questions of a sensitive nature.

3 Dillman, Don. 2000. Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, pp 167-169

4 duVair, Pierre. 1994. Contingent Valuation of Hazardous Waste Risk Reductions, dissertation, Graduate Group in Ecology, Office of Graduate Studies, University of California, Davis.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.**

  a) Description of the collection activity
  b) Corresponding form number (if applicable)
  c) Number of respondents
  d) Number of responses annually per respondent,
  e) Total annual responses (columns c x d)
  f) Estimated hours per response
  g) Total annual burden hours (columns e x f)

Hour Burden

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Form Number	(c) Number of Respondents	(d) Number of responses annually per Respondent	(e) Total annual responses (c x d)	(f) Estimate of Burden Hours per response	(g) Total Annual Burden Hours (e x f)
Initial phone contact	N/A	1400	1	1400	5 minutes (.083 hour)	116.6667
Initial contact + survey	N/A	1000	1	1000	30 minutes (.5 hour)	500
Totals	---	2400	---	1400	---	616.6667

Record keeping burden should be addressed separately and should include columns for:

a) Description of record keeping activity: None
b) Number of record keepers: None
c) Annual hours per record keeper: None
d) Total annual record keeping hours (columns b x c): Zero

- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

Annualized Costs

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (Hours)	(c) Estimated Average Income per Hour	(d) Estimated Cost to Respondents
Initial screener, viewing video, completing answer sheet	617	$25	$15,417
Totals	617	---	$15,417

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no capital operation and maintenance costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The response to this question covers the actual costs the agency will incur as a result of implementing the information collection. The estimate should cover the entire life cycle of the collection and include costs, if applicable, for:

Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms

Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection

Employee travel costs

Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information

Employee labor and materials for collecting the information

Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information

(a) Description of the Activity	(b) Cost
Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms	$ 1,235
Employee travel costs	3,000
Contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information	82,000
Employee labor and materials for collecting the information	1,479
Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collection information	3,233
Total	$ 90,947

Costs based on estimates developed for the life of the project, split across the various functions and responsibilities for the Research Economist, support staff, and Federal cooperator involved in this project.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments

reported in items 13 or 14 of OMB form 83-I.

There are no program changes or adjustments reported in FS-1300-25 items 17 and 19; part II item 10; and part III item 7B.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

Regression Analysis, Analysis of Variance, and/or Chi-square analysis will be used to identify treatment effects. In addition, we will use the Contingent Valuation methodology to estimate households' willingness-to-pay (WTP) for implementing the presented fuels reduction treatment alternatives. We will consider various choice models, such as logit and probit models in the LIMDEP, GAUSS, or EVIEWS statistical packages. Measurements of economic welfare will be reported as overall means without reference to individual respondents. One or more manuscripts will be submitted to peer reviewed journals interested in fire management and natural resources economic issues.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The OMB number will be displayed on the answer sheet along with the expiration date and will be available upon request to participants in the telephone interview.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."

Forest Service is able to certify compliance with all the provisions in the Act.

References:

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Bates, Nancy; Doyle, Pat; Winters, Franklin. 2000. Survey nonresponse: new definitions and measurement methods. A paper presented at the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Statistical Policy Seminar hosted by the Council of Professional Association on Federal Statistics (COPAFS); Bethesda, MD; November 9-0, 2000.

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